



23rd Year, 2nd Issue
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Communicator

Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



Bobbie Beth's Tidbits...

The Power of Partnerships...

As I reflect on life for deaf and hard of hearing people when I first arrived to Kentucky 12 years ago, or before that when I was in California, or even when I was still a young girl in Texas, I feel a calming sense of success and satisfaction of where we have been and where we are today. When I say the word “we,” I am not only referring to people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Kentucky, I am also referring to the country...to the world as a whole. Granted there is still much progress to be made, but the deaf and hard of hearing people in Kentucky have a lot to be proud of. Then I think of how this progress has happened. We didn't wake up one morning and have relay services or electronic devices that allow us instant communication or have telephones that are amplified so if one chose to speak for themselves on the phone and be able to read the printed response that person could. We didn't wake up to have videoconferencing installed in our home or in a local site to give us direct, instant communication potential. We didn't wake up to software that converts regular size print to an amplified print for persons who have visual impairments to have direct access to print materials. We didn't wake up to all of this amazing technology that has opened the door to independent communication and equal access. When I ponder where we have been and where we are today, it becomes very clear how this has all happened. It is through partnerships.

We, the KCDHH, have been and are very fortunate to have such strong partnerships with so many agencies and organizations who have a vested interest in deaf and hard of hearing issues in the state of Kentucky. It is through partnerships with

the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Department of Mental Health and Eastern Kentucky University, that videoconferencing is becoming mainstream throughout Kentucky. It is through partnerships with the Self Help for Hard of Hearing organization that the CapTel telephones are so popular with the community of people with hearing loss. It is through partnerships with the Kentucky Association of the Deaf that KCDHH is able to really reach out to the core of the deaf community to seek input on the needs of their communities. It is through partnerships with the Department of Education, the Kentucky School for the Deaf and the Kentucky School for the Blind, that educational opportunities for our children who are deaf or hard of hearing and blind or visually impaired are improving everyday. The KCDHH has solid partnerships with so many other wonderful agencies and organizations in the state of Kentucky that have contributed to enhanced lives of all persons who are deaf or hard of hearing in Kentucky. However, these partnerships do not stop at state lines. The KCDHH is also fortunate to have many national partnerships, which have contributed to the enhanced programs and services on a national level. Partnerships with other state and national organizations and other state Commissions, partnerships with Colleges and Universities and State Vocational Rehabilitation Offices and partnerships with the community...partnerships with YOU have contributed to this wonderful change that we benefit from today.

There is no one entity to thank for the programs, services and technology we live with and benefit from today. Every office, organization and agency that has a vested interest in serving people with hearing loss has earned the thanks for the world in which we live today. Did it happen overnight? No. Are we where we need to be? No. Have we made progress and are we committed to continued change and progress? Yes. We will always be on the road to continued progress, but we should all be proud of where we are today because of these partnerships. I know I am!

Bobbie Beth

Commission Members

Dr. Patricia Freeman, Chair
Member at Large Representative

Marcie Jeffers
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Pat Huddleston
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*The deadline to submit
information and articles for
the September 2005 edition of
the Communicator is August
2005. All materials provided
through KCDHH are available in
accessible format upon request.*

Chairperson's Article

Some exciting things are happening at KCDHH that I would like to share with you. As part of May is Better Speech and Hearing month, KCDHH did a press release giving information about the programs and services that we provide and some tips and statistics about hearing loss. In addition, a billboard was rented next to the KCDHH office with our contact information and the following:

Puzzled by Hearing Loss? We can help!



With the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) Distribution Program (which distributes TDD's,

amplified phones, captioned phones, amplified ringers and phone flashers, etc.), the KCDHH office now has a cabinet with all of the various pieces of telecommunications equipment that they distribute displayed so that if individuals have a difficult time choosing equipment from the picture and description, they can actually come to the office and try it to see if it is the best choice for them. It is best to call or email the KCDHH office ahead of time to let them know you would like to try the equipment so that a staff person is available to assist you.

Also, with the equipment distribution program, KCDHH was able to get the Public Service Commission to accept a waiver of the limit of 5 CapTel devices per month and allow KCDHH to have a one-time purchase of up to 100 CapTel devices for individuals on the waiting list. If you are not familiar with the devices, they are phones that automatically connect to a relay service that provides captioning over the phone in addition to being able to hear the person's voice. These have become very popular with hard of hearing persons. As a result of the waiver, KCDHH has exhausted their waiting list again. If you know of people who would benefit from any of the telecommunications equipment that KCDHH distributes, please tell them about it and have them contact us for an application.

Commission Staff

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Captioning for Hard of Hearing Students

With the rise of technology, it is no surprise that many services previously available only in stationary settings are now available remotely in real time. One such service is remote captioning, which is text captioning delivered from a distance to, in this case, an educational site where postsecondary students need the service. For hard of hearing students for whom English is the first language, printed English text is key in accommodating their educational needs, especially in real-time classroom settings. Just as a culturally Deaf student requests an interpreter for educational access, a growing number of hard of hearing students are requesting captioning for educational access. Captioning, on-site or remotely,

works by having a trained captioner enter what is being said by the lecturer or presenter into a specific software package. Typed text then appears on a screen, and the screen can be any size (from the smallest of laptop screens-or even PDA's or other small hand-held devices-to the largest of projection screens).

However, because Kentucky has a limited number of captioners who can provide the service on campuses, postsecondary institutions are beginning to investigate the feasibility (both technologically and financially) of purchasing the services from out-of-state sites. Leading this research is the Postsecondary State Outreach and Technical Assistance Center (SOTAC) at Eastern Kentucky University's Center on

Deafness and Hearing Loss. Through a U.S. Department of Education grant, the SOTAC is charged with staying abreast of current trends in postsecondary accommodations and the delivery of such accommodations. On a national level, a new organization, Speech-to-Text Services Network (www.stsn.org), is gathering national data on the use of captioning, be it remote or on-site.

For additional information on these services, or to provide comment about the need and desire for the service at the postsecondary level, feel free to contact Tricia Davis at EKU (tricia.davis@eku.edu, 859-622-8156), or visit the STSN web site for additional information about these forms of accommodation.



NEWS FLASH..... TDD Distribution Program Update

In case you hadn't heard the NEWS FLASH!! KCDHH has ordered specialized telephone equipment for everyone on the TDD Distribution Program waiting list, even those who wanted CapTel phones or were reapplications for second pieces of equipment. KCDHH obtained special permission from the Public Service Commission and Hamilton Relay, which permitted us to order up to 100 CapTel telephones although our monthly allotment is only 10. Receiving equipment has brought smiles to many faces throughout Kentucky, but especially in the Louisville area where a Fox 41 TV story ran in February and generated over 500 requests for equipment applications.

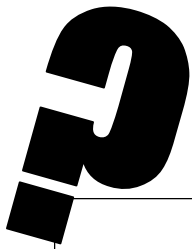
Effective July 1, the TDD Program will be offering 19 different kinds of telephone equipment (amplified phone, speech amplified phone, larynx/telephone, CapTel, TDDs and VCOs) and four different kinds of signalers (auditory, visual, combo and tactile). Equipment can be viewed and tested at the KCDHH office, Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

Please call 1-800-372-2907 to schedule an appointment, or view the web site for pictures and descriptions of the specialized equipment. **Encourage your family, friends and neighbors to apply for a device that will help them communicate better on the telephone.**

www.kcdhh.org

**Commission on the Deaf
and Hard of Hearing**
632 Versailles Road
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An agency of the Kentucky Education Cabinet



Hearing Loss

Do you suspect that someone you know has a hearing loss but does not realize it or is in denial of it? If so, ask them to take this quick quiz.

Do I have a hearing problem?

Ask yourself the following questions. If you answer “yes” to three or more of these questions, you could have a hearing problem and may need to have your hearing checked by a doctor.

- Do I have a problem hearing on the telephone?
- Do I have trouble hearing when there is noise in the background?
- Is it hard for me to follow a conversation when two or more people talk at once?
- Do I have to strain to understand a conversation?
- Do many people I talk to seem to mumble (or not speak clearly)?
- Do I misunderstand what others are saying and respond inappropriately?
- Do I often ask people to repeat themselves?
- Do I have trouble understanding the speech of women and children?
- Do people complain that I turn the TV volume up too high?
- Do I hear a ringing, roaring, or hissing sound a lot?
- Do some sounds seem too loud?

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